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231 241 Mixed farming is rare. Except in limited areas adjoining the few large cities, no fodder is grown for livestock. None of the considerable volume of oil cake and meal and beet pulp produced in Syria is used for animal feed. On farms animals feed primarily on grain stubble and cereal straw. Most of the livestock is entrusted to Bedouins who take their flocks of sheep and goats into the Syrian desert or steppe for grazing after the rainy season and return them to the cultivated areas after the sparse vegetation of the desert again dries up. Insufficient water, feed and lack of shelter on these migratory routes often combine to inflict a rather high mortality rate on livestock. Inadequate nutrition also increases the susceptibility of livestock to parasites and diseases.

These conditions indicate a need to introduce fodder into the crop rotation scheme, to improve pastures and to provide shelter and wells corresponding to the carrying capacity of the desert. While better nutrition is most essential, an effective campaign against disease and improvement in livestock breeds would also make an important contribution to raising the standards of animal husbandry.

442 241 8. *The organization and methods of marketing are in many respects defective.*

High costs of transport and the weak bargaining position of the farmer depress farm prices; and the cost of distribution combined with inadequate grading and cleaning is beginning to threaten Syria's competitive position on the world cereals market. Lack of credit and high storage prices generally compel farmers to throw their products on the market immediately after harvest. The merchant who has access to credit and often finances the farmer can largely dictate prices to the cultivator who has no reserves.

A number of measures to cope with this problem are indicated. Proper cleaning and storage facilities for grain are needed to enable farmers to get better prices and assist Syria in maintaining its position in a declining cereals market. New and improved roads would help to reduce marketing costs, and the availability of more and cheaper credit would make the farmer less dependent on the merchant.

650 All these problems and indicated measures will now be discussed more fully under the following headings: irrigation and reclamation; land policies and land settlement; improvement in agricultural production; animal husbandry; agricultural credit, cooperatives, marketing and education.

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Marketing

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The mission now comes to a consideration of the last but by no means the least important agricultural problem, marketing. This subject has many aspects, including transport, storage and grading, quality control and price stabilization. Improved marketing practices can yield the producer better prices and the consumers a higher quality product.

Elsewhere the mission discusses the vital factor of transport, and it has already commented on the role cooperatives could play in the local marketing of agricultural products. Here the mission wishes in the first instance to focus on the great importance of better facilities for the storage, cleaning and fumigating of grain. The lack of these facilities and the consequences for Syria have already been emphasized. The mission found a widespread recognition of their need in Syria, except perhaps among the merchants, who naturally feel that public grain storage and the extension of credit on the basis of warehouse receipts will weaken their control of the market. The mission considers it imperative, however, that Syria proceed with a grain storage program in order to strengthen the farmers and to maintain Syria's position in an increasingly competitive world grain market.

It is estimated that in the next decade some 760,000 tons of grain, principally wheat and barley, will enter commercial channels annually, and that this volume will be distributed among the producing regions approximately as follows: Jezireh, 400,000 tons; Euphrates, 95,000; Aleppo, 95,000; Hauran, 60,000; Homs-Hama, 50,000.

The mission recommends that total storage capacity of about 230,000 tons be established by 1960 at an estimated cost of £S 21 million. In the grain port of Latakia a transit silo with a capacity of 20,000-40,000 tons should be built. In Aleppo new facilities with a capacity of 60,000 tons are needed to supplement existing warehouse space, serve the surrounding grain-producing areas and operate as a reservoir for the rapid replenishment of the Latakia silo. For the Jezireh the mission suggests storage capacity of about 150,000 tons. The Latakia and Aleppo facilities should be mechanized and furnished with cleaning and fumigating equipment. In the Jezireh, however, the mission suggests that provisionally only about a fifth be mechanized. The storage there would consist simply of covered sheds which could be economically built.

The Latakia and Aleppo storage will enable Syria to export clean grain,

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free of infestation, which will better be able to withstand competition on the world market and fetch higher prices. The Jezireh storage will make it unnecessary for farmers to dump their grain on the market immediately after the harvest, enable them to obtain credit on easier terms, and lower the cost of transport. All the facilities together will significantly reduce the substantial losses resulting at present from exposure to weather, infestation and rodents. The mission's estimate of the direct advantages resulting from the reduction of losses and the improvement in prices leads it to conclude that farmers and merchants would have ample incentive to utilize the storage facilities, even after taking into account the storage charges they would have to pay on the basis of operating costs and amortization.

We believe that the storage facilities, even when they have to be built by the government, should be operated by qualified private management under a long-term lease which would specify the maximum permissible storage charges. Farmers and merchants are unlikely to use facilities operated by the government itself.

Measures to improve the marketing of certain other products should also be taken. Large quantities of raw milk are now marketed in major cities without adequate quality control or veterinary inspection of dairy cattle. The UNICEF, concerned over milk supply for children, has apparently offered to provide equipment and assistance for the installation of a pasteurization plant in Damascus, and the mission urges that this project be carried out as promptly as possible. A similiar plant may be feasible for Aleppo. It is important that some control be established also over the source of supply. Periodic tuberculin and blood agglutination tests for the diagnosis of tuberculosis and brucellosis in dairy animals might, for example, be initiated. In Aleppo, where many dairy cows are kept in the city under unsanitary conditions which produce a high incidence of tuberculosis, the removal of dairy cattle to locations outside the city is strongly recommended.

Improvements in public abattoirs would also bring about better prices for producers and provide a better quality meat for the consumer. Existing abattoirs are for the most part old, unhygienic and possess no means for salvaging many of the valuable by-products of slaughtering which could be used for the manufacture of fertilizers, chemicals and drugs. While complete renovation is not feasible in the immediate future, the mission suggests that a start be made by erecting a modern abattoir in Damascus at an estimated cost of £S 600,000.

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COTTON IN SYRIA

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Cotton bought in small lots from many farmers in various sections is thoroughly mixed in seed cotton storage bins in Aleppo, Syria, before ginning to get uniformity in the bale.

more neps, and often damage the fibers. Also, farmers have not been able to secure any higher price for their saw ginned cotton with less trash, but several dealers in Aleppo reported sales of saw ginned cotton at a premium, indicating that the market situation may be changing. 248 407

Whereas formerly ginners took the seed to cover the cost of ginning, with the increased value of the seed, ginners now are required to operate on a service basis for a fixed charge.

MARKETING

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The concentration of ginning equipment in a few large towns creates a difficult and expensive transportation problem for the farmers in remote areas. Because of the distance to the gins, many farmers are forced to sell cotton in the seed to merchants or middlemen in the local communities. Merchants gin the cotton for their own account and then dispose of the lint and the seed. Most of the gins are owned by merchants, but by no means do all merchants own gins.

Aleppo is the cotton merchandising center, with 47 exporters operating in this market in 1951. About half a dozen merchants, of whom two or three do a small export business, operate in Damascus. More than half of all the exports are sold through the three leading firms; the others do a small volume of business largely as a sideline. 1366

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COTTON IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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CLASSIFICATION

Seed cotton is bought on three grades: good, medium, and low. On taking delivery the ginner inspects the seed cotton for grade and staple and directs it to storage houses adjoining the gins where an attempt is made to sort into grades and to mix the lots thoroughly before ginning.

Lint cotton normally is sold on a basis of four grades: No. 1, corresponding roughly to good middling; No. 2, strict middling; No. 3, middling; and No. 4, low middling. In normal seasons, three-fourths of the crop grades middling and above. Export sales usually are made on the basis of sealed samples or types, and some exporters will have as many as eight different types.

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Table 25

SYRIA: Cotton Exports by Principal Destinations
September 1, 1951, through May 15, 1952

Country of Destination	Exports	Per Cent of Total
	Bales	Per Cent
France	66,590	48.1
United Kingdom	42,260	37.6
Italy	9,005	6.5
Spain	4,460	3.2
Poland	2,625	1.9
Germany	2,330	1.6
Belgium	656	.5
Sweden	610	.4
Netherlands	311	.2
Others	35	
Total	139,194	100.0

Source: Trade Reports.

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PRICES

During the period of world scarcity in 1950-51, prices of Syrian cotton on the local market advanced steadily to a high of slightly over 70 cents per pound. Export quotations were even higher. Prices declined during the 1951-52 season from approximately 50 cents a pound to 33 cents in the spring. Subsequently, the price firmed somewhat and during the summer cotton was selling in Europe for approximately the price of United States cotton on a dollar exchange basis. Syrian cottons, however, have been sold for soft currencies, and the discount must be taken into consideration.

Prices between grade 1 and grade 4 vary about 12 per cent.

Various producers expressed the view that a world price of about 30 cents a pound would be attractive to Syrian farmers and probably would stimulate further expansion. A world price much below this level, on the other hand, likely would discourage production.

A series of studies made by a large foreign firm interested in investing capital in cotton production and processing in Syria found that cost of production was below 20 cents per pound when normal yields were obtained but was much higher in poor years, such as 1951-52.

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COTTON IN SYRIA

production, conserve water, concentrate cotton so as to facilitate insect control, and protect the cotton industry against the high costs and low prices that might result from over-extension of production. Farmers are required also to receive licenses to plant cotton from the local representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Cotton Board.

The only marketing regulations issued to date require that all bales show the name of the ginner, the identity, and especially the moisture content of the cotton, which cannot be more than 9 per cent. If false claims are made, the government can take 30 per cent of the cotton as a penalty.

It is obvious that the enforcement of so many scientific regulations and controls over a large area is going to be difficult without a large force of trained technicians and police.

The Director General appreciates that without adequate trained personnel it is not possible to make the regulations completely effective overnight, but he hopes, through education, to obtain the compliance of the producers.

Ambitious research and education programs, another responsibility of the board, are still in the planning stage.

PROSPECTS

It appears unlikely to expect any significant expansion in production in Syria until yields can be stabilized. A start has been made, but a more intensive research and education program is required on cultural practices (particularly irrigation practices), mechanization, and especially insect control, before much improvement can be expected. Such efforts naturally take considerable time, even when funds and technical assistance are available. Both money and know-how are limited in Syria.